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Bridoux, Jeff

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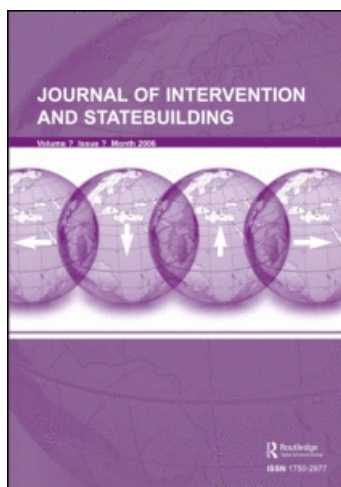
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### Postwar Reconstruction, the Reverse Course and the New Way Forward: *Bis Repetitas?*

Jeff Bridoux<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University, Wales

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# Postwar Reconstruction, the Reverse Course and the New Way Forward: *Bis Repetitas?*

**Jeff Bridoux**

*This paper compares two sets of US-led postwar reconstruction strategies: the Reverse Course in Japan after World War II and the New Way Forward in Iraq in 2007 and 2008. Relying on Antonio Gramsci's concept of power, the article argues that in the wake of military victory in Japan and Iraq, the US attempted to found a new historical bloc in the occupied countries, a historical bloc centred on capitalism as a mode of production and US ideas and values as the ideological cement coalescing the Japanese and Iraqi population and elite around the US project. The paper contends that consistency of action between reconstruction policies, and between reconstruction policies and regional and global foreign policies, is the key to the efficiency of postwar reconstruction projects. Consistency of action refers to the maximisation of power resources and to their use in a coherent way; that is avoiding opposition and favouring complementarities between means of power used. Such consistency was achieved in Japan while its attainment in Iraq is less obvious.*

**Keywords** postwar reconstruction; Iraq; Japan; Antonio Gramsci; New Way Forward

It is the purpose of this article to compare two US-led postwar reconstruction strategies: the Reverse Course between 1947 and 1952 in Japan and the New Way Forward between January 2007 and July 2008 in Iraq. It is argued that both sets of policies were born out of local, regional and global security issues affecting the status of the United States as global power. Indeed, both policies are the offspring of a US grand strategy of global primacy pursued since the early 1940s (Williams 1959, Liska 1967, Aron 1982, Layne 2006). However, both the Reverse Course and the New Way Forward deviated from a focus on security to adopt a holistic approach to the challenges faced in Japan and Iraq. Indeed, the US government developed strategies aiming at simultaneous progress in the security, political, economic, and civil society spheres of occupied countries. In other words, in addition to a narrowly construed definition of security focusing on military and material capabilities, US officials added concepts such as

interdependency (taking into account regional realities), shared values, socialisation and identity, in order to achieve success in their reconstruction projects.

By analysing similarities and differences between the two cases, this article intends to assess the measure of success of the change of policy in Iraq. Considering that the Reverse Course can be qualified as a success of American foreign policy, we use this case as a benchmark against which the New Way Forward is compared. Success is defined here as the achievement of stated US foreign policy objectives in relation to the reconstruction policies implemented.

Antonio Gramsci (1971) offers several concepts that are relevant to understanding why postwar reconstruction succeeds or fails: organic intellectuals (in the definition of reconstruction policies), a historical bloc (the formulation and implementation of policies aiming at the acquisition of consent to US reconstruction projects, with the ultimate aim to ensure consent to US hegemony in reconstructed countries), the state (political society and civil society), and his concept of power, differentiating between power expressed through coercion and power as consent-based. We apply these concepts to the achievements of both sets of policies across four fields of reconstruction: the security, the economy, the state, and civil society.

Moreover, while not explicitly formulated by Gramsci but implicitly apparent in his writing on the ideological cohesion needed to build up a new historical bloc, it is argued here that the idea of 'consistency of action' in the making of a new historical bloc is another explanatory factor to be considered, as it is identified as paramount to the efficiency of reconstruction projects as a whole. Hence, in the case of postwar reconstruction, consistency of action between reconstruction policies, and between reconstruction policies and regional and global foreign policies is the key to success. Consistency of action, similar to Nye's (2009) concept of smart power, refers to the maximisation of power resources and to their use in a coherent way that is avoiding opposition and favouring complementarities between means of power used (Bridoux 2011, p. 5).

This article opens with an examination of the context and origins of the Reverse Course and the New Way Forward. It is contended that both changes of policy were generated by pressures from special interests groups; more accurately, in their perception that the security of the United States regionally and globally, and hence its status as global superpower, was at stake. In addition to concerns regarding the regional and global US position of power, security and stability in the reconstructed country was paramount to the efficient deployment of reconstruction policies.

The second section applies Gramsci's concepts of power and historical bloc to the Reverse Course and the New Way Forward, looking at the content and impact of these new policies across the four fields mentioned above (security, economy, state, civil society). Using Gramsci's insights and the concept of 'consistency' as indicators, the realisations of the policies in each of these fields are analysed.

The final section assesses the outcome of the Reverse Course and the New Way Forward and offers an explanation of their successes and failures in terms of power.

## Context and Origins

Two sets of factors explain the change of reconstruction policies in Japan and Iraq: the perception of a threat to American security and status as global superpower and the organisation of a response to this threat by special interest groups, acting *de facto* as Gramscian organic intellectuals, formulating elements of a new policy embodying their ideas and values regarding the role of the US in Japan and Iraq, and by extension, in the region and in the global order (see Parmar 2002).

A postwar reconstruction project can be seen as the construction of a new historical bloc in an occupied country, translating into the instillation of liberal capitalism as a new mode of functioning destined to replace the authoritarianism of the toppled regimes. In so doing, the United States tried to empower a capitalist elite in tune with Washington's objectives of recasting both Japan and Iraq in the liberal capitalist democratic world while preserving the newborn democratic institutions, themselves protecting the rule of the capitalist bourgeoisie over the masses in these two revived countries (Dodge 2009). In so doing, the US aims at creating a new 'historical bloc' in occupied countries, characterised by an interactive process in which the potential hegemon presents its policies as being in the interests of the targeted subordinate actor(s). It has to incorporate the subordinate's interests and accordingly make the necessary concessions in its programme for hegemony in order to obtain the consent of the less powerful (Showstack Sassoon 1982, p. 111). A historical bloc requires what Gramsci terms 'organic intellectuals'. They cement the links between structures and superstructures by producing and organising ideology (Gramsci 1971, p. 5, Gill 1986, p. 210). Intellectuals are in charge of the formulation of a message able to gain consent to the ideology of the ruling class and to the organisation and running of the governmental apparatus. These two functions correspond to the dual composition of the superstructure: civil society (private sphere) and political society (the state), corresponding to the two functions of hegemony exercised throughout society and direct domination through the governmental apparatus (Gramsci 1971, p. 12). These intellectuals are described as 'organic' by Gramsci. They do not constitute a social class on their own but are the 'organically' linked thinking and organising elements of a fundamental social class. In addition to the two previous functions, their main function is to direct the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they 'organically' belong by forging, as they do for the whole society, a common identity. In the case of the reconstruction of Japan and Iraq, two sets of 'organic intellectuals' can be identified acting in two different ways: 1. the personnel of the occupation authorities and Washington-based officials who formulated the policies that structured the reconstruction of the occupied country through the production of a new state apparatus and the definition of an organising ideology aiming at its perpetuation; 2. the local elite (politicians, civil servants, businessmen) across the political and civil societies, trained and politically indoctrinated to

perpetuate and secure the ideas and values that cement the historic bloc: freedom, democracy, capitalism and free markets.

The appropriation of Gramscian concepts in International Relations studies is a contested approach. Indeed, the conceptual appropriation of Gramsci's work by the Italian School generated objections in terms of the viability of the interpretation of Gramsci's work, the applicability of his key concepts to the study of international relations—especially the concept of a global civil society (Joseph 2002, Jessop 2003)—the relevancy of Gramsci's concepts to understanding the contemporary social order (Germain and Kenny 1998), a weakness in the applicability of Gramscian ideas to concrete situations (Ayres 2008, Worth 2008, 2011, Worth and Murray 2009), and a reduction of the role of structures in the making of hegemony through an over-emphasis on agential interaction (Bhashkar 1991, Joseph 2002).

Interpreting Gramsci is a difficult enterprise given the conflicting influences that characterised his life and his work, and the particularly appalling conditions in which he wrote his key texts, *The Prison Notebooks*. Moreover, the appropriation of Gramscian insights by the Italian School is not without problems. Indeed, key Gramscian concepts have been de-contextualised and hence misunderstood in their application, as Germain and Kenny (1998, pp. 8, 15–16) contend about the concepts of civil society and hegemony (Rupert 1998). These critiques insist on the lack of operationalisation of Gramscian ideas in the study of international relations or, to be more accurate, in the difficulty of 'globalising' Gramsci's ideas. Indeed, operationally speaking, the process of their application has sometimes been described as 'amorphous' (James and Lake 1989) and the neo-Gramscian transformative and ethical objective of analysing the global civil society counter-hegemonic movements resisting and attempting to transform a global neoliberal capitalist order falls short of uncovering global mechanisms of ideological dissemination, which in turn 'calls the whole idea of global hegemony into question' (Femia 2005, p. 343).

The objective of this study does not consist in an attempt to read and apply Gramsci's concepts to the global political order and to investigate the existence and functioning of a global hegemonic transnational managerial class aiming at universalising a dominant capitalist mode of production. Rather, it aims at looking at how a concept of power influenced by Gramsci's statement that power is coercion and consent contributes to understanding the outcome of national and international dynamics at play in the cases of the reconstruction of Japan and Iraq.

## The Reverse Course: Global Challenges and Making Use of the Intellect of Organic Lobbyists

American reconstruction policies in Japan experienced a U-turn in 1947 to adjust to global and regional factors. At the global level, Soviet domination in Eastern Europe and assertiveness in other parts of the world, especially in the Middle East

and the Mediterranean; the economic crisis shaking Western Europe and the need for extended American involvement in that region; and the US policy of operating in an open, global, capitalist framework, all concurred in the definition of a new role for Japan. Regionally, the looming collapse of China into Communist hands, the sorry state of the economy in the Far East, and the desperate economic conditions in Japan were perfect conditions for a swing of the whole region towards Moscow. Washington reacted by offering to Japan what it had gone to war for: economic interdependence with Asia. A number of US top officials got organised to secure East Asia to American interests by making Japan the bulwark of the fight against Communism in the region. To reach this objective, the US literally created a new historical bloc in Japan, built on capitalism as the mode of production and cemented by an organising ideology founded on democratic liberalism, spreading across Japanese civil society. Illustrating the importance interest groups can have in the formulation of US foreign policy, these officials could rely on the American Council on Japan (ACJ), initiated in August 1948 by Howard Kern, the virulent anti-Communist editor of *Newsweek*. He made use of his numerous contacts inside the occupation and with Japanese officials 'to inform the American public and to assist the Truman Administration in solving those problems that must be solved if victory in Japan is to be assured' (Schonberger 1989, pp. 144–145).

Although the ACJ was a small and loosely structured pressure group, its members were among the most ardent participants in the debate over Japanese policy, providing ideological, strategic, and economic rationales for the creation of a new capitalistic structure in Japan. The peace and security treaties marked the culmination of efforts by the Japan lobby to reverse the reformist orientation of the early occupation, to make Japan a bulwark against Communism in Asia, and to rivet Japan into an American-dominated world capitalist system (Schonberger 1977, 1989, pp. 159–160, Lafeber 1997, p. 275). The ACJ was opposed to the socialistic ideals of the economic doctrine applied in Japan, attacked the policies of de-concentration of economic power, and particularly the purge programme, applied by MacArthur, on the grounds that the removal of leading figures in industry, commerce, and finance would disrupt the economic recovery. The ACJ organised the dissemination of these opinions in Japan and the United States by creating networks of communication between Japanese and US officials, and by arranging conferences with media professionals, academics, business leaders, and public opinion leaders for the spreading and acceptance of its objective in the United States and in Japan, especially through the influence of General Robert L. Eichelberger (1947, Reel 36, 1947 Diaries), who was sympathetic to the ACJ's thesis, considering that nothing in Japan had been done to counter the interests of the Russians. Eichelberger would soon become the main point of entry for ACJ's members' and American officials' contacts with Japanese policy-makers, bankers and industrialists favourable to their views.

In this way, the ACJ and its supporters acted as organic intellectuals, defining new directions to be taken by reconstruction policies in Japan in order to secure the new historical bloc created by the US, with capitalism as the mode of

production, and liberalism as the ideological cement binding the Japanese state to its civil society. This process was further solidified through the permanent injection of American ideas and values across the Japanese political and civil societies, buttressing the hegemony of liberal capitalism in the country. Japanese and American officials, influenced or reinforced in their opinions by the activities of the ACJ, thus set off to change the design of the occupation. Their objectives were to strengthen the Japanese economy and the overall role of Japan in the region through remilitarisation and an early Peace Treaty with the US (Kern 1949). Consequently, the policy on excessive concentration of economic power in Japan became the first target of the Reverse Course. Later on, the reformists obtained a Peace Treaty and security agreements that would anchor the US in Japan and configure the East Asian security landscape, with Japan as a junior partner in the defence of American interests in the region.

In contrast to Japan, the reconstruction of Iraq was faced with strong security challenges from the outset. While the purpose of the occupation and the reconstruction was the same as in Japan, i.e. the creation of a new historical bloc built on liberal capitalism aiming at turning Iraq into a country friendly to US interests; there was a blatant lack of a cementing ideology that could make such a new historical bloc successful. Indeed, while the new structures of a capitalistic Iraq were painfully set up, democratic institutions aiming at diffusing ideas and values that would coalesce the Iraqi state and civil society, and hence secure hegemony for the new US-sponsored ruling class, were violently questioned by strata of the Iraqi population. Three years after the invasion, the conditions to see a successful creation of a new historical bloc were still absent in Iraq, prompting the US administration to review its policies and to adopt the New Way Forward.

### The New Way Forward: Bringing Together a Winning Team

By the end of 2006, sectarian deaths in Iraq were soaring and little was done by the Coalition and the Iraqi government to stop the haemorrhage. Consequently, the US administration presented the New Way Forward in January 2007, constituting a response to failures resulting from an early transfer of security responsibilities to Iraqi forces or a belated response to growing sectarian violence. It designed a new campaign plan lasting until July 2008. A fundamental change in the Bush administration's thinking occurred: national reconciliation would not be the product of a nationwide agreement of what Iraq should look like but would come from a long and piecemeal process involving all actors; while Iraqi forces have developed their capacities, they are not ready to act independently; Iran and Syria are pointed out as troublemakers in Iraq and should be confronted by the US; and the stability of Iraq is an international and regional issue which calls for further diplomatic efforts to involve key international and regional actors (National Security Council 2007, pp. 7–9).



Hence, the main elements of the New Way Forward included: to increase American force levels by more than 20,000 troops to support Iraqi Security Forces 'to help Iraqis clear and secure neighborhoods, to help them protect the local population, and to help ensure that the Iraqi forces left behind are capable of providing the security that Baghdad needs', the reinforcement of the Iraqi state's monopoly on force through strengthening its military and police forces, the implementation of infrastructure reconstruction and economic programmes aiming at giving 'every Iraqi citizen a stake in the country's economy', and the organisation of democratic elections and a review of laws that contributed to ethnic and religious tensions in Iraq (de-Baathification and oil revenues essentially) (Bush 2007).

To these local measures, the US administration, following the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, developed a new form of engagement with Iraq's neighbours. A two-track policy involved containing Syria and Iran, the main purveyors of weapons to Sunni and Sh'ia militias in Iraq, while engaging the other Arab states to financially support the economic recovery and help the political unity of Iraq (Petraeus 2007). Finally, both local and regional items of the New Way Forward are ensconced in broader security foreign policy considerations that underline the ideological nature of the fight the US is leading in the Middle East, a fight between moderation, freedom and democracy on one side and extremism on the other, a fight between good and evil (Bush 2007).

For G.W. Bush, the entire rationale sustaining the American war in Iraq rests ultimately on the idea that stability in the Middle East, achieved through the promotion of democratic ideals in the region, will be conducive to regional stability and friendliness to the US, hence contributing to global stability and status quo with the US in the driver's seat (Bush 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003, Gordon 2003).

Putting its 'organic intellectuals' to work, the Bush administration set out to review its policies in Iraq, adopting a more holistic approach to the problems faced on the ground. Indeed, there was a shift from an exclusive focus on answering violence with coercion and new instruments of power based on generating consent were used. Coercion and consent were to work in association in order to restore conditions conducive to the creation of a new historical bloc favouring the US project of turning Iraq into a capitalistic and democratic state friendly to US regional interests.

Embodying these objectives, the New Way Forward is the result of broad consultations by G.W. Bush following the failure of his previous policies. Two trends emerged from the discussions. On the one hand, some advisers were not in favour of sending more troops to Iraq but recommended putting the emphasis on training the Iraqi military, economic recovery, political reconciliation and on taking into consideration the consequences of new strategies on and the reaction of Iraq's neighbours. On the other hand, some experts on Iraq, while also lauding a more comprehensive approach to the Iraqi maelstrom, were in favour of buttressing the American military presence in Iraq through what was to be called the Surge. This opinion was supported by a report published by Frederick Kagan

from the American Enterprise Institute, *Choosing Victory—A Plan for Success in Iraq* (Kagan 2007).

A comparison between the AEI report and the NSC's 2007 *Iraq Strategy Review* shows similarities regarding the strategy to be adopted, with its emphasis on sending more troops, and some differences regarding the sources of violence in Iraq, the NSC Strategic Review including Iran and Syria as destabilising factors on top of Iraqi domestic elements (National Security Council 2007, Kagan 2007). In contrast to the role of the ACJ in Japan, the AEI's recommendations focused on the security sphere, while the ACJ's programme permeated the four dimensions of the reconstruction effort (security, state, economy and civil society). The Bush administration, while understanding the AEI's argument that progress in the security sphere conditioned progress in the other fields of the reconstruction, also appreciated that it was necessary to move away from the exclusive use of coercion to tame the insurgency. Indeed, what makes the New Way Forward interesting, and similar to the Reverse Course, is the comprehensive coverage of the challenges faced in Iraq; the adoption of policies mixing coercion and consent in expressing power, and in tune with each other across the four fields of reconstruction; and, the reconnection of the reconstruction strategy with long-term regional and global US foreign policy objectives: global and regional stability contributing to the furtherance of the US at the helm of a democratic capitalist global order.

The next section investigates the content and achievements of the Reverse Course and the New Way Forward making use of Gramsci's concepts of power, the state, and the historical bloc; and we look at how consistent these policies were in their implementation in the four fields of reconstruction, and with US regional and global foreign policies.

## Reconstructing Japan and Iraq

### Gramsci: Power and the Historical Bloc

Gramsci bases his definition of power on the concept of 'dual perspective', defined as 'the dialectical unity of the moments of force and consent in political action' (Gramsci 1971, p. 169). The dual perspective can be reduced to two fundamental levels that represent the dual nature of power as expressed by Machiavelli's Centaur, half-animal and half-human (Machiavelli 2004, p. 74). It is what Gramsci defines as 'the levels of force and consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation' (Gramsci 1971, p. 169). This concept avows that as long as the consensual aspect of power is at the forefront, hegemony prevails. Force should only be used in rare deviant cases as most of the time conformity of behaviour is ensured by the prevalent hegemony. Thus such a concept of power differentiates between consent, and its corollary hegemony, and force and its translation into domination. Hegemony does not mean the

eradication of coercion, as it is always latent though undesirable to use. On top of the dual perspective, it is necessary to look at two other concepts at the core of a Gramscian approach to power that prove useful here: the state and historical bloc, as well as how these concepts relate to power and how they can prove useful in analysing reconstruction projects.

The state in its broad Gramscian definition consists in civil society (sphere of private interests) and political society (state apparatus), hence ‘not merely the governmental apparatus, but also the “private” apparatus of hegemony or civil society’ (Gramsci 1971, p. 261). It includes the traditional view of the administrative, executive, and coercive apparatus of government coupled with the underpinnings of the political structure in civil society, elements such as the church, the educational system, the press, and briefly ‘all the institutions which helped to create in people certain modes of behaviour and expectations consistent with the hegemonic social order’ (Cox 1996, p. 126). To be successful, policies of power, expressed through coercion and consent, must be deployed in the civil and political society.

Accordingly, there is a continuous interplay between the actor seeking to generate consent to its power exercise, and targeted subordinate actor(s). The interplay aims at the identification, aggregation and incorporation of subordinates’ vital interests into the policies of the prevailing class, the whole procedure being wrapped in institutions and processes constituting a canvas preserving the stability and cohesion of the system. This is what Gramsci calls a historical bloc, at the core of his notion of hegemony and defined as: ‘Structures and superstructures form an “historical bloc”. That is to say the complex, contradictory and discordant ensemble of the superstructures is the reflection of the ensemble of the social relations of production’ (Gramsci 1971, p. 366). The historical bloc is brought into existence by the presence of a hegemonic social class. Its main function is to maintain cohesion and identity within the bloc through the propagation of a common culture. A social class is hegemonic if it manages to bring the subordinated masses to agree with its own ideas, values and interests, and, more important, if it manages to present them as universal, meaning in the general interest of the diverse social formations on which hegemony is implemented. This implementation takes place by giving some satisfaction to the subordinate groups while not jeopardising the interests of the ruling class (Cox 1996, p. 132). But coercion is a key ingredient of a successful policy of consent generation as ‘normal conditions of ideological subordination of the masses—the day-to-day routines of a parliamentary democracy—are themselves constituted by a silent, absent force which gives them their currency: the monopoly of legitimate violence by the State’ (Anderson 1976, p. 43).

In the making of a new historical bloc, both coercion and consent work hand-in-hand as the analysis of the Reverse Course and the New Way Forward will now illustrate.

## The Reverse Course

The first act of the Reverse Course unfolded in the economic dimension of the reconstruction, but was expanded later on to reconstruction of the state and civil society. In Gramscian language, the Americans set up a new historical bloc built on the preservation of a Japanese capitalistic economy and, ideologically, on a Japanese state and civil society expressing strong anti-Communism and a corollary adherence to democracy. The Reverse Course was the product of worrying Washington officials and an American business elite who feared that the economic de-concentration programme in Japan 'has been or may be carried too far' and might interfere with economic recovery and self-sustenance (US Department of State/FRUS 1972, pp. 320–323, GHQ/SCAP 1990b, p. 22), identified as 'socialistic and contrary to Anglo-Saxon philosophy' (US Senate 1947, pp. 11809–11811) and going far beyond the necessary objective of eliminating trusts and cartels in Japan (Schaller 1985, pp. 117–118, 197–200, 207, GHQ/SCAP 1990a, p. 22). In 1948, the Draper economic mission in Japan concluded that it was necessary to eliminate extreme forms of economic concentration in Japan without hindering production, which meant restoring the Japanese capitalistic class and securing a conservative government, while containing the left (Schonberger 1977, p. 197). The seeds of a new historical bloc with Japanese conservatives sympathetic to American capitalist interests at its core were thus sown.

Consequently, the official turn of the American reconstruction policy in Japan encompassed: no further extension of the purge; further planned reduction of the costs of the occupation borne by the Japanese government; economic recovery of Japan as a primary objective of US policy; no pre-censorship of the Japanese press; the development of medium and long wave radio broadcasts from Okinawa to enhance the appreciation of American ideas by the Japanese; the rapid conclusion of wartime trials; and, finally, the availability of Northeast Asia to Japan's needs and trade, loss of which through Communist victory in China and then Southeast Asia would be a serious setback, as Japan's recovery badly needed trade opportunities (Kennan 1948, pp. 691–696, US Department of State/Policy Planning Staff 1981, pp. 180–182, CIA–I– 1982, Reel 2, SWNCC and SANACC 1977, Reel 31).

With the Soviet control on atomic weapons assured in September, the Communist victory in China in October 1949 and with the beginning of the Korean War in June 1950, the Reverse Course unfolded without much resistance. The time was ripe for the launching of a red purge and generally a tougher stance against the left in Japan that would assure the alignment of Japanese society with the American project by eradicating alternatives, and secure economic recovery. Political, economic and civil society re-engineering were led in a consistent fashion, further participating in the attainment of the American final objective: making Japan a capitalist economy, led by an elite supporting American regional and global interests, a new historical bloc buttressing American hegemony. The freedom of movement granted to the Japanese

political and economic elite would thus be matched by a reduction of liberties and political expression in the civil society, exemplified by the suppression of the right to strike in the public services and the eradication of the Communist political presence in all strata of Japanese political and civil society (Cohen 1987, pp. 449–452, OSS/State Department undated b, Reel 5, no. 40). Well-orchestrated anti-Communist propaganda managed to secure the consent of the Japanese people to this sudden change of policy. From democratisation and demilitarisation to economic reconstruction and radicalisation of the struggle against Communism, the American policy realised a U-turn that seemed almost insane to many Japanese as the Korean War broke out.

The war next door was a gift from the Gods for Japan (Dower 1979, p. 424), as the US called on Japan to produce the materials needed to fight the Communist invasion. It would also have another controversial outcome: the remilitarisation of Japan and the conclusion of a Peace Treaty and Security Agreement placing Japan as the most Western frontier of the United States, as the bulwark of American security in the region, the first line of defence against Communism. Japan became a huge factory to help the economic recovery of East Asia, and a massive American base destined to contain the Soviet Union (Dower 1999, pp. 541–546).

In addition to the re-creation of Japanese political and civil society and economy, the US embarked on reviewing its position regarding the military power of Japan, aiming at buttressing its security in the region and hence its control over East Asia. In fact, the security aspects of the reconstruction of Japan constituted the last building block of the US-led reinvention of its former enemy. So far, the reconstruction of the state, the economy and the civil society have been investigated and the conclusion is that, thanks to the consistency between policies implemented in these three fields, the reconstruction of Japan was rather effective, even though Communist ideas were still propagated in Japan. By addressing the question of Japan's domestic and regional security, the US would achieve new levels of consistency between policies of reconstruction and its regional and global foreign policies. This consistency of action between reconstruction policies, international and regional realities and US foreign policy objectives led to the effective reconstruction of Japan in the long run, with the casting of Japan as an unconditional American ally in the region, contributing to the achievement of the ultimate US foreign policy objective: maintaining its position of strength in East Asia, and hence contributing to global US supremacy. Regarding Asia and particularly Japan, America opted for a development of global and regional economic complementarities in order to repel Communism and to trigger economic growth. NSC 48 embodied this new approach. The document warned that if Japan fell into the Soviet sphere of influence, it would shift the balance of world power to the disadvantage of America. To meet this menace, Washington opted for the promotion of democratic forces and economic stability through economic assistance, the development of economic relations between Japan and other free countries of the world, and US support against external aggression (National Security Council 1987, Reel 2, p. 6). NSC 48 also

recommended the opening of Southeast Asia to Japan for raw materials and exports. Japan was to become the factory of Asia, the main force for regional economic development, which would lead to the strengthening of social and political stability in a region open to American economic interests and contributing to US security interests (National Security Council 1987, Reel 2, pp. 24–25).

The outbreak of the Korean War accelerated Japan's transformation. Globally, it forced Truman to adopt NSC 68, the core text of the Cold War policy formulating the doctrine of containment of the USSR. Regionally, Japan became the first beneficiary of the war, and witnessed an economic boom stimulated by US 'special procurements' (Joint Strategic Plans Committee 1951, Reel 6). The Korean War kick-started the Japanese economy and launched it on the path to success, which in turn allowed for the overall success of the reconstruction policies thanks to the economic gains enjoyed by Japan. 'Special procurements' brought an estimated \$2.3 billion into Japan between June 1950 and the end of 1953. Moreover, between 1954 and 1956, 'new special procurements' added another \$1.75 billion. This enabled Japan to increase its imports and to double the scale of production in key industries (Dower 1999, p. 542). Boosted economically, Japan was also bestowed a key role in the re-definition of US foreign policy through the doctrine of containment, seeking 'global situations of strength'. Japan was one of these and as such the reconstruction of the country became critical. Hence, it had to be integrated coherently into the general framework of US foreign policy definition. The security and economic fields of the reconstruction effort intersected as the security gains made by the US thanks to the economic reinforcement of Japan were matched by the wealth and consent to US policies generated amongst the Japanese elite and general population.

The remilitarisation of Japan was subsequently dealt with through a Peace Treaty and Security Agreement aiming at keeping Japan oriented to the West; denying Japan to the USSR in time of peace or war; securing the availability of Japanese bases for US military operations in the event of war; and making Japan's war potential available to the US (US Department of State/FRUS 1976, 1389, US Department of State 1955, p. 3171).

Japan was all but a satellite of the United States. Its economy was reliant on US imports of Japanese goods, its security was totally dependent on the presence of American forces based in the region and its army was exclusively equipped, trained and at the disposal of the US. The democratisation that characterised the early reconstruction of Japan was put on hold and the former political and economic elite back in power. In a sense, the US sacrificed the genuine development of a democratic society in Japan on the altar of American regional and global security and supremacy. Ironically, it is one of the key factors explaining the effectiveness of the reconstruction of Japan. However, from an American point of view, such a policy was consistent with the overall objective of reinforcing US supremacy in East Asia and its global status as a superpower. The welfare and security of the American political and economic elites

took precedence over a genuine exercise of democracy. The collusion that characterised the subsequent relations between American and Japanese capitalism and political elites is testimony to the success of the overall American project of reconstructing Japan and of the creation of a new historical bloc congenial to US interests.

The story in Iraq would be rather different. Three years after inefficient reconstruction policies and in the face of seeing its project of cementing a new historical bloc preserving American interests in the Middle East, the US administration eventually decided to review its approach and delivered a new strategy that was to prove more efficient in its conceptualisation, objectives and implementation.

### Flexibility and Adaptability, the New Way Forward

The New Way Forward acknowledges the multidimensional character of the challenges facing the reconstruction of Iraq and consequently produces a strategy whose four components are inter-related and mutually reinforcing as well as being aware of the need to review the regional US posture in the Middle East in order to address the Iranian and Syrian threats to Iraqi stability (Petraeus 2007, 2008, *The Economist* 2008a, p. 8). On top of more multilateralism and more engagement with Iraq's neighbours, the New Way Forward is developed around four axes.

Firstly, the security dimension is deemed essential for progress to be made in other fields. Consequently, the Bush administration operated the so-called Surge, sending an additional 37,000 American troops to Iraq. Government Accountability Office (GAO) and Department of Defense (DoD) reports from June 2008 show that after the Surge started the violence sharply decreased from 180 recorded attacks per day in June 2007 to 45 attacks in May 2008, even though Baghdad remains highly volatile and recurrent sectarian and militia-led violence plagued Basra during spring 2008 (GAO 2008, pp. 11–13). The Surge mainly aimed at wresting sanctuaries from Al-Qaeda control and facing up to Iranian-supported militia extremists. Tactically, it put the emphasis on counterinsurgency practices, underscoring the importance of units living among the people they are securing through joint security stations and patrols with the Iraqi Security Forces, the overall goal of the operation being 'to pursue Al Qaeda-Iraq, to combat criminals and militia extremists, to foster local reconciliation, and to enable political and economic progress' (Petraeus 2008, p. 1). The Surge aims at creating conditions conducive to successful reconstruction projects having a quick and direct impact on Iraqis.

Indeed, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) launched large reconstruction projects aiming at restoring and developing Iraqi infrastructure, especially regarding essential services. The New Way Forward, through the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), argues that smaller reconstruction projects showing rapid benefits to the population are essential to succeed. Aiming at delivering quicker results in order to show Iraqis that reconstruction was progressing, the Department of State launched the PRTs in November 2005, 'to

lead the decentralizing of U.S. reconstruction and capacity-building efforts' (SIGIR 2008, p. 81). The idea was to develop local actions aiming at capacity-building of local governments, through inter-agency teams working on building provincial, municipal and local capacity in dealing with central government and citizens. In addition, micro-loans to develop the economy locally were delivered, programmes aiming at strengthening the rule of law were implemented and steps were taken to promote national reconciliation by building bridges between communities (USAID 2007, p. 5).

In addition, with the January 2007 Surge, complementing the 10 existing PRTs, 15 embedded PRTs (embedded with military brigade combat teams) were created, being active mainly in programmes aiming at gaining the loyalty of the local population. The objective was to encourage the support of moderate elements seeking peaceful ways of resolving political differences (SIGIR 2007, p. 75, 2008, p. 81). They implemented local governance programmes aimed at training new locally elected individuals on issues like governance, public finance, and city planning and reconstruction project management.

In October 2007, SIGIR released an audit on PRTs' results and concluded that they were making incremental progress. On governance, progress was being made but there was a need to see the enactment of the Provincial Powers Law to define the rights and responsibilities of government offices and to hold provincial officials accountable for their actions. The rule of law proves more difficult to work on as there is a lack of coordination between police and the judiciary on top of permanent security issues involving threats made to judges. Reconstruction projects were usually efficiently dealt with by Iraqi provincial officials, including budget execution, but there was a lack of human and material resources for maintaining infrastructures. National reconciliation showed little progress, except in Anbar where local tribes rallied to face Al-Qaeda and support the national government. As SIGIR explains, 'efforts toward reconciliation have been undermined by tension between rival Shia groups, a sense of alienation among Sunnis, and growing public frustration over the inability to obtain government services' (SIGIR 2007, p. 160).

In addition to fostering good governance with local officials, the PRTs worked with Iraqi civil society organisations in a similar fashion. The focus was on 'empowering women, youth issues, business development, agriculture and agribusiness and advocacy work for a democratic and tolerant Iraq' (USAID 2007, p. 7). PRTs also buttressed and organised the Sunni 'Awakening Movement' in Anbar and the Concerned Local Citizens across Iraq, leading to further security gains. Finally, to help areas in which insurgents are particularly active, and hence which are finding it harder to benefit from the reconstruction projects, the US government developed the Community Stabilization Program (CSP), with the objective of restoring economic and social stability in communities affected by insurgent activity, while concurrently building the foundation for long-term development. Its main mode of action consists in addressing the youth through the creation of employment and skills development programmes. The CSP uses public works activities to integrate ethnically and religiously diverse youth, while



fostering tolerance and managing conflict, which in turn limits the risk of seeing idle youth accepting money from terrorists or insurgents to attack Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces (USAID 2007, p. 16).

In parallel to the Surge and its civilian component aiming at better performances for reconstruction projects, the New Way Forward insists on developing further Iraqi capacity in the field of security. A June 2008 DoD report states that 478,000 Iraqi security personnel have been trained since late 2003 and that Iraqi forces have performed well in numerous operations (US Department of Defense 2008, p. 35). However, a GAO (2008, p. 27) report tempers the DoD's optimism by shedding light on the actual level of readiness of the ISF to perform security tasks on their own, qualifying it as showing 'limited improvement'. The report highlights the low level of autonomy regarding logistical capabilities and combat support, the lack of a single unified force, the sectarian and militia influence impeding some operations, and training and leadership shortages (GAO 2008, pp. 29–31). However, as mentioned above, some Sunnis turned away from the insurgency and from support for Al-Qaeda in Iraq to form the Sons of Iraq (numbering 91,000 under contract in April 2008). The movement started with Sunni awakening, rejecting the indiscriminate violence of Al-Qaeda in Iraq and aware that it will be difficult to share in Iraq's wealth if they do not contribute in the political arena. However, questions remain regarding the increased risk of insurgent infiltration in their ranks, and the need to have a coherent transfer mechanism for those former insurgents into Iraqi institutions or civilian life.

A second key component of the Way Forward is constituted by national reconciliation efforts through the enactment of key legislation. So far four laws addressing Sunni concerns have been enacted: the de-Ba'athification reform allowing lower-ranking members of the party to return to government jobs, but its implementation stalled; the amnesty of certain detainees, especially Sunnis and Sadrists detained without trial (but the law does not cover all detainees); a provincial powers law formalising the sharing of power between national, provincial and local governments; and the Provincial Elections law, providing electoral rules in order to organise new elections aiming at forming provincial councils more representative of the population they serve. All four laws seek to open avenues to Sunni participation in Iraqi political life and hence are critical to national reconciliation. However, two other essential pieces of legislation have not progressed. The Hydrocarbon law is in the process of being drafted and three of its four provisions are still pending. Finally, little progress has been made on the disarmament and demobilisation of militia, essentially due the lack of a secure environment, the inclusion of all parties in negotiations, and appropriate reintegration opportunities. So far, none of these conditions are met (GAO 2008, pp. 34–40, 2009, p. 9). In addition to these critical laws, the review of the October 2005 Constitution has not progressed. Three contentious issues are still being debated: the power of the presidency; the status of disputed areas, especially Kirkuk; and the relative power among federal, regional and provincial governments (GAO 2008, pp. 42–43).

The third pillar of the New Way Forward is to make sure that the Iraqi government executes its capital investment budgets, essential as most US

reconstruction projects are nearing completion. The inability of the Iraqi government to use its considerable resources is essentially due to the lack of security, a shortage of trained staff; and weak procurement and budgeting systems. Consequently, the US has provided the Iraqi ministries with training programmes and embedded advisors to help them spend their resources. However, these efforts are not integrated as various US agencies lead their own programmes (GAO 2008, pp. 43–49, 2009, pp. 7–8).

Finally, the fourth component of the new US strategy consists in improving the delivery of essential services to the Iraqi population. However, low spending rates in the sectors of oil production, electricity generation and water, the lack of an integrated energy strategy, endemic corruption, continuous security issues, and lack of Iraqi expertise in maintenance did not allow for substantial progress to be made (GAO 2008, p. 53).

Since the implementation of the New Way Forward, some progress was made in all areas of reconstruction. Gradually, the Iraqi state is getting stronger; civil society is developing and learning how to contribute constructively in the country's development, while also learning how to voice its concerns regarding the state. In the most important field of security, Iraqis have made incremental progress and the Coalition has accelerated the transfer of security duties to ISF in the eighteen provinces. However, when needed, the Coalition remains ready to support ISF operations. The economy is progressing steadily, driven by high oil prices and thanks to better security conditions, reconstruction projects are moving on faster, creating more jobs and wealth. On the political front, while much still needs to be done, critical legislation has been enacted, gradually clearing the path to national reconciliation.

However, much remains to be done to be able to qualify the US project of reconstructing Iraq as successful. Indeed, while all indicators regarding violence levels regressed, it is still endemic in Iraq. Al-Qaeda, while diminished, is not vanquished, and die-hard Sunni insurgents are still active. The Sunni and Shia militias remain an issue and a potentially very serious source of violence, especially towards Iraqi civilians. Security conditions thus remain volatile and dangerous across Iraq, with continuous religious and ethnic violence leading to further displacement of population in and out of Iraq, hence depriving the country of a whole layer of technocrats and professionals (such as doctors, nurses, teachers), who, because they belonged to the 'right' religious group, had the chance to develop skills under the previous regime (GAO 2008, p. 16).

While it is still too early to predict the final outcome of postwar reconstruction in Iraq, the US government, through the New Way Forward, seems to have managed to develop a reconstruction strategy that takes into account all dimensions of what post-conflict reconstruction entails. Policies and actions in the four fields of the reconstruction move in parallel and consistency of action is a key parameter for US officials in order to measure progress. In Gramscian terms, some sort of balance has been achieved between means of power relying on coercion and expressions of power favouring consent. In areas where coercive instruments of power have cleared the path to the institutionalisation of new

relations between the US-sponsored elite and the population, the foundations of a new historical bloc enshrining liberalism and capitalism have started to solidify. Gradually, active coercion is being displaced by passive, or what we could term 'preservationist' coercion, and policies generating consent to the new order.

### Conclusions: Assessing the Reverse Course and the New Way Forward

In the final section of this article, the findings are summarised and a judgement ventured on the outcome of the US policies in Japan and Iraq. To do so, the three key analytical tools are put at the centre of the appraisal: power as coercion and consent, consistency of action across the four fields of reconstruction, and consistency of action between policies of reconstruction and regional and global US foreign policies.

In Japan, the United States maximised its use of power instruments, mixing coercion and consent with consistency, and also ensured that reconstruction policies implemented in the four fields were complementary. Moreover, reconstruction policies were congruent with regional and global American foreign policies, as the reverse course of 1947 illustrated. Regarding the reconstruction of the Japanese state, the democratisation first took a punitive shape with a purge programme aimed at the elites responsible for the war. The purge was generally welcomed by the Japanese public, especially since it did not concern removing the Emperor. The forces constituting the political and civil societies were then co-opted into the project of creating a new Japan. Here, the Japanese national trait of looking for strong leadership played a role in the successful outcome of the political reforms. The leadership provided by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers/General Headquarters (SCAP/GHQ) proved instrumental in the dissemination and incorporation of democratic modes of action at all levels of Japanese society. Regarding the economy, the economic reconstruction of Japan was designed to complement the political reinvention of the country. Economic freedom and free trade went alongside political democratisation. Both were in permanent interaction and reinforced each other's achievements. At the end of the process, Japan was a liberal capitalist country backed by American economic power. The United States managed to lead Japan and its people on a path of economic development that would exclude any chance of unrest due to poor economic conditions. The overwhelming American economic power allowed for the US to support the Japanese recovery and integrate Japan in its economic sphere, contributing to its rise to the status of second biggest economy in the world. On the subject of the re-moulding of Japanese civil society, the occupation did manage to win the hearts and minds of the Japanese people and American values were embraced without much resistance. While tradition remained central to the life of the Japanese, the path to progress that opened after the end of the war was without doubt made in America. Political and economic liberalism became the norm for the Japanese,

who, without renouncing their sense of group belonging, learned individualism through the integration of individual liberties in their daily lives. At the end of the occupation, the democratisation of the country was a success. Of course, the realities that sprang from the Cold War tempered these achievements as the reverse course illustrated, but the authoritarianism and militarist ideology that plagued Japan were all but eradicated. In the realm of security, the position of the United States in 1945 was unmatched. During the democratisation process in Japan, it always loomed in the background. The massive presence of US military personnel and material in Japan reminded the Japanese every day that resistance was futile. Moreover, security considerations and the beginning of the Cold War enhanced such a perception as the Japanese witnessed the military build-up that turned their country into an American fortress. At the end of the reconstruction process, the Japanese political, educational, cultural and economic institutions were re-moulded according to an American model. In all fields the Occupation authorities oriented Japan towards American values and interests. By the end of the occupation, Japan's institutional landscape was democratic and liberal. Moreover, Japan was integrated into the regional and global institutional frameworks initiated by the United States and became the cornerstone of American regional policy in East Asia.

Indeed, the effectiveness of reconstruction in the four fields was also matched by consistency of US foreign policies with reconstruction policies. Due to the need to contain the rise of Communism, Japan was eventually invited by the United States to join the military effort in the struggle against the Soviet Union. Even though the military was discredited, the fact that Japan was allowed to develop a self-defence force contributed to the renaissance of Japanese national pride as sovereignty was regained. The remilitarisation of Japan was then sold to its neighbours through a series of military agreements with Asian nations aiming at calming their fears of a potential resurgence of Japan as a military power. In the years that followed, the United States, thanks to its military presence in Japan became a major power in East Asia, which in turn contributed to the maintenance of its status as global superpower. Moreover, the US designated Japan as being at the heart of US security interests in the region, turning Japan into a key ally. Such a redefinition of Japan's role led to the implementation of an anti-Communist programme across all spheres of the reconstruction effort, turning Japan into a conservative democratic and capitalist country, whose elite would consistently align themselves on US interests, hence contributing to the reinforcement of the US strategic position in East Asia, and thus buttressing the US global position of power.

Put against the definition of success by the American administration, it seems that the Reverse Course was a rather efficient venture. All the objectives set by the administration were achieved and Japan became and still is a faithful ally of the United States. The United States carefully planned and staffed the reconstruction process, took care of contingencies, and precisely defined the role of Japan in the American sphere of influence. It was successful because the US made efficient use of nuances of power, avoiding contradictions in its use across

the fields of reconstruction. It was successful because every single realisation of the reconstruction process aimed at one objective: the maintenance and reinforcement of American supremacy in East Asia and globally in the face of the rise of its challenger and rival ideology, the Communist USSR. The reconstruction of Japan was integrated fully in the definition of American foreign policy objectives and as such benefited from high levels of coherence in its implementation.

In Iraq, since January 2007, marking the beginning of the New Way Forward, reconstruction policies were altered and became more complementary. While the Surge put more boots on the ground, counter-insurgency tactics changed from 'find, fix, finish' to 'clear, hold, build'. Indeed, in the wake of the securitisation of a neighbourhood, local expert teams made up of American advisers and Iraqis move in quickly, protect the population, identify critical needs, start up reconstruction projects, and improve governance, in order to isolate insurgents. Coercion and consent walk hand-in-hand. Coercion establishes the conditions conducive to generating consent, which in turn leads to the stabilisation of the area. Gradually, bringing a sense of normality to the population allows the reconstruction of the country to move on. As of today, compared to two years ago, critical advances have been made in the security, political, economic and civil society fields. While fragile, these advances are permanently reinforced and Iraq is now moving on.

Finally, we argued that consistency of regional and global foreign policies with reconstruction policies deployed in the four dimensions of the reconstruction constitute another explanatory factor of the outcome of a post-conflict reconstruction project. In Iraq, we saw that early US foreign policies failed to address the regional issues caused by the invasion of Iraq. Iran and Syria, both key regional actors, were not engaged with by the US administration, causing both countries to support Iraqi factions in their opposition to the American presence. However, following the New Way Forward, tactical progress made in Iraq was reinforced by a review of the US foreign policy posture regarding reconstruction. New levels of consistency are now achieved regionally as the US gets more engaged with Iran and Syria, both responsible for the flow of fighters and material support to terrorists and insurgents. By recently opening the door to negotiations with Iran on the status of its nuclear programme, the US gives itself a narrow space for linking both issues. If Iran is more amenable, it will benefit Iraq, and the US project as a whole. Globally, the US recently adopted a lower profile regarding its status as global superpower. Of course, one can argue that US military capabilities are over-stretched and hence Washington had better not flex its muscles again (Wallerstein 2002, Mann 2004, Todd 2004). However, it seems that the Bush administration understood that the Iraq reconstruction would be better off if treated multilaterally. The International Compact on Iraq brought together the international community under the IMF and UN umbrella, and structures the international support to Iraq since May 2007, gradually leading the country's integration in the global economy and international community (International Compact with Iraq 2008).

The new Iraqi state has not failed yet. Despite its shortcomings, the permanent struggle between parties to control ministries including through the use of their militias, the endemic corruption, and the lack of skills and experience of bureaucrats, the Iraqi state is reinforcing itself and has started, whilst under American tutelage, to perform its duties towards the Iraqi population. As Toby Dodge argues, the Iraqi 'state is beginning to re-cohere' (quoted in *The Economist* 2008b, p. 30).

So, if we put the American objectives of regime change in Iraq against gains made since the reconstruction began, did the US reach its goals? Regarding WMD, it did, not because invading US forces found and dismantled them but because they simply were not there. In the absence of weapons of mass destruction, the second US goal consisting in cutting Ba'athist support to terrorist groups was also reached, the worst case scenario seemingly disappearing. Again, as of today nothing proves that Saddam was ever actively supporting terrorist groups. Toppling Saddam Hussein and replacing him with a democratic regime friendly to the US and its regional interests became a foreign policy objective after the invasion. Is Iraq a democracy today? More importantly, is it supporting the US in the Middle East? The first question would require a whole book dedicated to it. However, elections did take place, were deemed fair and Iraq has now an institutional structure contributing to democracy anchorage in the country. Moreover, it seems that the US managed to avoid the exclusive dominance of an Islamic party in Iraq, a concern that agitated CPA and American officials from the beginning of the reconstruction project. In addition, democracy is further reinforced by Iraqi civil society, actively developing, and starting to play its role as guardian of democratic gains made. So, if referring to a restrictive classic liberal definition of democracy with its emphasis on procedural and electoral democratic governance, one can argue that Iraq did achieve some measure of progress towards democracy.

However, five years into the reconstruction, Iraq is not supporting US regional interests. By the look of it, access to oil will be heavily controlled by the regions, and less by the central government, and US oil firms will not be alone in winning contracts. The Iraqi government is gaining in capacity and resources and is now more daring. The other 'unofficial' objective consisting in enhancing US physical control in the Middle East is thwarted by the Iraqi government's insistence on seeing all US forces leave Iraq by the end of 2011, as enshrined in the November 2008 Agreement between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq on the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of their Activities during their Temporary Presence in Iraq and the Strategic Framework Agreement for a Relation of Friendship and Cooperation between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq, hence defeating the US objective of having a permanent US military presence in Iraq.

Overall, the US-led reconstruction of Iraq is a failure regarding the defence of US interests. On top of the astronomical amount of money spent by Washington on the 'war on terror' and especially on reconstructing and controlling Iraq,

America lost more than it gained in the venture. Indeed, with more than 4,000 killed and more than 30,000 wounded, the US is paying a heavy price in Iraq. Moreover, to the loss in human and material resources, we can add the loss of international sympathy which contributed to a questioning of US legitimacy as a force for stability in the international system. Overall, the lack of consistency of US policies in Iraq, in the Middle East and globally, essentially due to a misunderstanding of the limits of power in the contemporary world, contributes to a strategic weakening of the US global stance, and to questions over the status and future use of American power.

The analysis of the reconstruction of Iraq, viewed through the lenses of the concept of power, consistency of action of policies of reconstruction in the security, political society, economy and civil society, and through integrating inter-related influences of the local, regional and global levels of power exertion, embodies the limits of the US conceptualisation of power and hence questions the status and effectiveness of US power exertion as conceived by the G.W. Bush administration.

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